Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims:

1. – 12. (canceled)

13. (currently amended) A ~~An apparatus for managing a plurality of incoming and outgoing transactions at a~~ network storage device, comprising:

computer readable storage medium; and

computer readable program code residing in said storage medium, including program code that is executed to: ~~for~~

receive an incoming transaction having a data field that includes a meta data field with data and a priority field with a requested priority;

define a usage policy that assigns a priority to the incoming transaction based on the data in the meta data field and that assigns priorities to outgoing transactions; and

override the priority based on the data in the meta data field with the requested priority included in the priority field of the incoming transaction.

~~defining a usage policy for prioritizing said plurality of incoming and outgoing transactions relative to one another.~~

14. (currently amended) The network storage device of claim 13, wherein said program code is further executed to:

read, by an agent in the network storage device, the data in the meta data field;

compare the data to conditions defined in a table having the usage policy; and

prioritize the incoming transaction based on a comparison of the data to the conditions in the table.

~~An apparatus as in claim 13, wherein said computer readable program code resides at a policy management server and further comprises program code for distributing said usage policy to said network storage device.~~

15. (currently amended) <u>The network storage device of</u> ~~An apparatus as in~~ claim 13, wherein said computer readable program code further comprises program code for identifying said network storage device, and wherein said network storage device is a NAS device.

16. (currently amended) <u>The network storage device of</u> ~~An apparatus as in~~ claim 13, wherein <u>the priority based on the data in the meta data field is based on an application ID of an application originating the incoming transaction.</u> ~~said computer readable program code further comprises program code for prioritizing said number of transactions based on said usage policy.~~

17. (currently amended) <u>The network storage device of claim 13, wherein the meta data field includes both a user ID and a purpose for accessing the network storage device.</u> ~~An apparatus as in claim 16, wherein said computer readable program code further comprises:~~
    ~~program code for installing on a policy management server, said program code for defining a usage policy; and~~
    ~~program code for installing on said network storage device, said program code for prioritizing said transactions.~~

18. (currently amended) <u>The network storage device of</u> ~~An apparatus as in~~ claim 13, wherein<u> the priority based on the data in the meta data field includes a particular partition of the network storage device.</u> ~~said transactions are incoming transactions to said network storage device.~~

19. (currently amended) <u>The network storage device of</u> ~~An apparatus as in~~ claim 13, wherein<u> an agent in the network storage device assigns a priority to the</u>

<u>incoming transaction based on the data in the meta data field.</u> ~~said transactions~~
~~are outgoing transactions from said network storage device.~~

20. – 21. (canceled)

22. (new) A method for managing transactions at a network storage device,
comprising:

receiving, at the network storage device, an incoming transaction having a
data field that includes a meta data field with data and a priority field with a
requested priority;

assigning, by an agent at the network storage device, a priority to the
incoming transaction based on the data in the meta data field satisfying a
condition of a usage policy; and

overriding, at the network storage device, the priority based on the data in
the meta data field with the requested priority included in the priority field of the
incoming transaction.

23. (new) The method of claim 22 further comprising:

reading, by the agent, the data in the meta data field;

comparing the data to conditions defined in a table having the usage
policy;

prioritizing the incoming transaction based on a comparison of the data to
the conditions in the table.

24. (new) The method of claim 22, wherein said priority based on the data in the
meta data field includes an application ID of an application originating the
incoming transaction.

25. (new) The method of claim 22, wherein the priority based on the data in the
meta data field includes both a user ID and a purpose for accessing the network
storage device.

26. (new) The method of claim 22, wherein the priority based on the data in the meta data field includes a particular partition of the network storage device.